

A Profile of Dentists in North Dakota November 2000

In November of 1998, a survey of dentists holding a license in North Dakota was conducted by the North Dakota Department of Health and the Office of Rural Health. The questionnaire was sent to 365 dentists in conjunction with their registration renewal. No follow-up was done with non-respondents. Two hundred seventy-three surveys were returned for a response rate of 75 percent. Since the survey was designed to gather information about dentists currently practicing in North Dakota, only responses from actively practicing dentists were included in the final data set. After adjusting for professionals not practicing or practicing out of state, retired dentists, and dentists enrolled in out-of-state residency programs, the study population was made up of 287 dentists. Two hundred thirty-four surveys were returned from dentists actively practicing in the state for an adjusted response rate of 82 percent. This data will serve as baseline to track the dentist workforce trends in the state. A database of dentists was created and will be updated every two years.

Summary findings:

(Findings represent only those dentists who responded to the survey.)

Residence

More than one-half (60.3%) of the dentists live in the state's major cities/metropolitan statistical areas. Almost one-third (32.1%) reside in Bismarck and Fargo.

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Bismarck | 13.7% |
| Fargo | 18.4% |
| Grand Forks | 10.3% |
| Jamestown | 3.8% |
| Minot | 9.0% |
| Williston | 5.1% |

While 95.7 percent of the dentists reside in North Dakota, 4.3 percent reside in the neighboring states of Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana.

More than one-half (62.0%) of the dentists reside in five counties in the state.

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Burleigh | 13.7% |
| Cass | 20.5% |
| Grand Forks | 11.5% |
| Ward | 10.3% |
| Williams | 6.0% |

Age

The age of dentists ranged from 28 to 80. The average age was 48.2 years, and the median age was 47.3 years.

A breakdown of dentists by age group follows:

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| 26-30 years | 1.3% |
| 31-35 years | 6.1% |
| 36-40 years | 11.7% |
| 41-45 years | 22.1% |
| 46-50 years | 22.9% |
| 51-55 years | 12.6% |
| 56-60 years | 12.1% |
| 61-65 years | 8.2% |
| 66-70 years | 1.7% |
| 71+ years | 1.3% |

Experience

The range in years of dental experience was from one to 54. The average number of years of dental experience reported by the respondents was 21.5 years.

Employment Status

A majority of dentists (99.6%) are currently working in positions that require they keep their registration current, while 0.4 percent are working in positions that do not require current registration.

Primary Practice Employment

Location

More than two-thirds of the dentist respondents (67.5%) practiced in the state's major cities or metropolitan areas. More than one-third (35.1%) practiced in Bismarck and Fargo.

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Bismarck | 13.7% |
| Fargo | 21.4% |
| Grand Forks | 9.8% |
| Minot | 9.4% |
| Williston | 5.6% |
| Jamestown | 4.2% |
| Dickinson | 3.4% |

Practice Sites

More than three-fourths (84.2%) of dentists practice at only one site.

Less than one-fifth (15.8%) of dentists practice at two sites.

Less than 1 percent practice at three or more sites.

Hours

The range of hours worked at the primary practice site was from one to 80 hours. The average number of hours worked was 33 hours per week.

The range of hours worked at the secondary practice site was from three to 23 hours. The average number of hours worked was 9.5 hours per week.

The range of hours worked and the average number of hours worked at a third practice site were the same, at 4 hours per week.

Staffing

The number of staff reported by respondents at the primary practice location follows:

| Dentists | | Registered Dental Assistants | |
|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | 69.8% | 0 | 31.6% |
| 2 | 20.5% | 1-2 | 39.9% |
| 3 or more | 9.0% | 3 or more | 28.4% |
| Registered Dental Hygienists | | Unregistered Dental Assistants | |
| 0 | 28.5% | 0 | 57.0% |
| 1-2 | 47.4% | 1-2 | 35.5% |
| 3 or more | 24.1% | 3 or more | 7.3% |

Practice Setting

Nearly three-fourths (72%) of dentist respondents reported they were in a solo practice at their primary practice setting. Nearly one-half (48.5%) also reported being in a solo practice at their secondary practice site.

A breakdown of practice settings for primary and secondary locations follows:

| <i>Primary Practice Site</i> | | <i>Secondary Practice Site</i> | |
|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Solo | 72.0% | Solo | 48.5% |
| Group | 22.4% | Group | 39.4% |
| Public Health | .9% | Public Health | 9.1% |
| Institutional | 1.3% | Institutional | 3.0% |
| Education | .4% | | |
| Other | 3.0% | | |

Practice Specialty

The percentage of dentists who completed a degree program or are board certified in a specialty is listed below.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| General Dentistry | 84.5% |
| Endodontics | 1.7% |
| Oral Maxillofacial Surgery | 4.3% |
| Orthodontics | 4.7% |
| Oral Pathology | .4% |
| Pediatric Dentistry | 1.7% |
| Periodontics | 1.3% |
| Prosthodontics | .4% |
| Oral Surgery & Oral Pathology | .4% |
| Oral Surgery & Periodontics | .4% |

Patient Activity in Practice

Survey respondents described their ability to accept new patients.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Currently accept new patients | 91.7% |
| Seek new patients | 24.2% |
| Accept new Medicaid patients | 43.0% |
| Unable to accept new patients | 6.6% |

Appointment Wait Times

Survey respondents indicated the amount of time a new patient had to wait for examination and treatment in their office.

For Examination

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| One week or less | 28.9% |
| More than one week, but less than two weeks | 26.7% |
| More than two weeks, but less than four weeks | 27.6% |
| More than four weeks, but less than six weeks | 10.7% |
| More than six weeks | 6.2% |

For Treatment

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| One week or less | 19.0% |
| More than one week, but less than two weeks | 28.2% |
| More than two weeks, but less than four weeks | 27.2% |
| More than four weeks, but less than six weeks | 14.9% |
| More than six weeks | 10.8% |

Adding Associates to Practice

The percent of respondents who tried adding associates within the last year follows:

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Yes, successful | 8.9% |
| Yes, pending | 2.7% |
| Yes, without success | 4.9% |
| No | 83.5% |

Staffing Vacancies

Survey respondents reported the staff openings that they were unable to fill in the past year.

More than three-fourths of the respondents reported no vacancies or reported being able to fill the vacancies. Nine percent reported dental hygienist vacancies and 10.6 percent reported dental assisting vacancies. A breakdown of the vacancies follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
| No hygienist or assistant vacancies | 82.5% |
| Full-time registered dental hygienist vacancy | 2.6% |
| Part-time registered dental hygienist vacancy | 6.4% |
| Full-time registered dental assistant vacancy | 8.5% |
| Part-time registered dental assistant vacancy | 2.1% |